

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOT ART EXHIBIT USHERS IN SACRAMENTO'S SUMMER

History and culture abound in the art exhibit currently on display in the Atrium of the Bateson Building in downtown Sacramento. The collection reflects the emotions involved with patriotism, cultural pride, and a renewed respect for our seniors. Each piece in the collection is original and created by patients who participate in the Arts In Mental Health (AIMH) program at Patton State Hospital (PSH).

The AIMH Program provides PSH residents with an environment of dignity and creativity in which they can turn potentially negative, destructive behavior into positive, creative expression through literary, performing, or --in this case -- visual arts. "Art is one of the many successful and rewarding therapeutic programs available for the mentally ill," said Dr. Stephen W. Mayberg, Director of the State Department of Mental Health. "Some of these murals represent collaborative efforts of individuals who, in any other environment, would not typically work well together. Yet, given the right opportunity and environment, they collaborate to create spectacular works of arts as seen here," said Mayberg.

One such collaborative effort is "Los Angeles de Historia", an 8' by 12' group mural suspended from the third floor landing on the 8th Street side of the Atrium. As the focal point of this exhibit, it represents the work of approximately 20 artists working "todos unidos" (all together) for a one year period. The process began with participants sketching each other then drawing from their life experience and memories to add bits and pieces of their Hispanic culture, history, and Mexico's landscape. Along the 8th Street corridor are four paintings produced by the Veteran's Group, some of whom are WWII veterans. Their theme this year -- land, air, sea, and home -- is appropriately represented by United States flags, Pearl Harbor, and the Liberty Bell. "The experience of the veteran and the resultant national pride gives quite a different dimension to an exhibit such as this," said Mayberg.

In addition to the cultural and patriotic themes, "hands" photographs - black and white photos of the artists' hands -- give us a glimpse of the artists while maintaining their privacy. One such photograph actually captures a few of the artists creating *Badger In A Purple Jungle*, a vase which is one piece of the beautifully hand-crafted pottery collection included in the exhibit. Work from the "masters group" provides us with the perspective of mental health clients/artists who have a deep appreciation of fine art and previous art training. The "geriatric" clients' work, located immediately inside the 9th Street door, celebrates life as it is enhanced and enriched through personal experiences. Always popular is the "Hispanic" collection which hangs on the 9th Street hallway. This year, Mexican proverbs, or "Dichos" such as "Barriga Llena, Corazon Contento" ("or A Full Belly, A Happy Heart") are featured.

The Hospital is a maximum security, forensic psychiatric facility providing a full range of treatment services to 1300 adult men and women, all of whom are admitted under the provisions of the California Penal Code. The artwork currently on display in the Atrium represents approximately 80 patients who reside at the hospital and participate in the AIMH Program. The AIMH Program at Patton includes patients, Rehabilitation Therapists, Social Workers, psychology staff, and unit staff at the Hospital. State Lottery and State Hospital funds provide for materials and supplies while grants from the California Arts Council support artists in residence salaries and special musical presentations. The AIMH Program is the administered by the State Department of Mental Health.

The public is cordially invited to drop by the Department of Mental Health to view this spectacular artwork between regular business hours now through August 26. For more information about the Patton art exhibit, contact Ms. Wesley Fenning, 909-425-7626. Questions about the AIMH Program should be directed to Ms. Ilene Goodwoman, AIMH Project Director, 916-654-2525.

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